

Message Text

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FOL REPEAT KINSHASA 1227 SENT ACTION SECSTATE
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S E C R E T KINSHASA 1227

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DEPT PLEASE PASS AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO
SUBJECT: ANGOLA: TOUR D'HORIZON WITH MOBUTU

1. BOTH BISENGIMANA EARLIER AND MOBUTU AT LUNCH ON FEBRUARY
10 SAID THAT THEY HAD PRETTY WELL CONCLUDED, FROM NGUZA'S
REPORTS, THAT THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER SIGNIFICANT US
ASSISTANCE TO FNLA/UNITA. TO MY INTERJECTION THAT THE
ADMINISTRATION HAD NOT YET DISCARDED IDEA OF ASKING CONGRESS
FOR OVERT AID TO THE TWO MOVEMENTS, MOBUTU SAID THAT HE HOPED
THIS WOULD TRANSPARE--BUT IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HE WAS
NOT COUNTING ON IT. IN FACT, WHEN I PURSUED THE QUESTION OF
SAVIMBI'S AND HOLDEN'S CHANCES OF HOLDING OUT THROUGH
GUERRILLA TACTICS, MOBUTU INDICATED THAT NEITHER HE NOR KAUNDA
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COULD AFFORD TO OFFER THEIR TERRITORIES AS REAR BASIS.

"HOW CAN WE PROTEST SOVIET/CUBAN-BACKED INCURSIONS
OR SUBVERSIVE ATTEMPTS FROM THEIR ANGOLA BASE IF WE OURSELVES
ALLOW SUCH ACTIVITIES?" HE PREFACED THIS STATEMENT BY SAYING
THAT THE QUESTION WAS "VERY DELICATE"--IMPLYING THAT INDEED
HE MIGHT FIND A WAY TO DE-STABILIZE THE NETO REGIME--BUT
THE THRUST OF HIS POSITION, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT TERM,
SEEMS CLEARLY TO BE THAT ZAIRE (AND ZAMBIA) WILL REFRAIN
FROM CONSPICUOUS OR SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT TO SAVIMBI AND HOLDEN.

2. I TRIED TO PIN MOBUTU DOWN ON WHAT HE THOUGHT
SAVIMBI WOULD OR COULD DO IN THE ABSENCE OF WESTERN AND
ZAIRIAN SUPPORT. WOULD SAVIMBI, FOR EXAMPLE, ALLY EVEN
MORE OVERTLY WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS AND ATTEMPT TO RUN
GUERRILLA OPERATION FROM THE SOUTH AFRICAN BUFFER ZONE?
MOBUTU, LIKE BISENGIMANA HAD BEFORE, BRUSHED THIS ASIDE,
SAYING THAT HE DOUBTED THE SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD GO ALONG
WITH SUCH A PLAN. IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR WHETHER IN SO
SAYING MOBUTU SIMPLY ASSUMES THAT THE OUTCOME OF THE
MILITARY SITUATION IN FAVOR OF THE MPLA IS A FOREGONE
CONCLUSION, OR WHETHER PERHAPS HE IS AWARE OF SOME
ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN UNITA AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS--
BUT DOESN'S CARE TO DISCUSS IT. BISENGIMANA TOLD ME AFTER
THE LUNCH WITH MOBUTU THAT THE MPLA WOULD CERTAINLY BE
ACCEPTED AT THE OAU MEETING TOWARD THE END OF THE MONTH.
THUS, ON BALANCE, MY GUESS IS THAT MOBUTU HAS RELUCTANTLY
CONCLUDED THAT THE BALANCE OFF POWER IN ANGOLA HAS SHIFTED
AGAINST HIM AND THAT HE IS PREPARING TO ACCOMMODATE THERETO.
THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT MOBUTU WILL RUSH OUT AHEAD OF OTHER
AFRICANS TO RECOGNIZE THE MPLA; ON THE CONTRARY, I WOULD
EXPECT HIM TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY.

3. BISENGIMANA HAD EARLIER ALLUDED TO A POSSIBLE ARRANGE-
MENT BETWEEN MOBUTU AND NGOUABI WHEREBY ZAIRE WOULD MAKE ITS
ACCOMMODATION WITH THE MPLA AND THE CONGO MIGHT BE INSTRU-
MENTAL IN HELPING TO MOVE THE SOVIETS/CUBANS OUT OF ANGOLA.
WHILE THIS MAY IN FACT HAVE BEEN MOBUTU'S PLAN, NGOUABI SEEMS
TO HAVE PUBLICLY SQUASHED THE IDEA OF A MEETING WITH MOBUTU
FOR THE TIME BEING. AS THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN BRAZZAVILLE
SURMISED (SEPTEL), IT COULD BE THAT MOBUTU'S OVERTURES RAN
SQUARELY INTO A REFUSAL BY NETO TO PLAY. WHETHER MOBUTU
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ACTUALLY TRIED AND FAILED REMAINS A SUBJECT OF SPECULATION,
BUT WHAT HE TOLD ME WAS THAT NGOUABI WAS A "SOVEIT PUPPET"
WHO HAD REFUSED TO MEET WITH HIM ON SPURIOUS GROUNDS.
THUS AGAIN, I WOULD CONCLUDE THAT THE OFT-RUMORED ZAIRIAN
OPENINGS TOWARD THE MPLA, IF THEY ARE TRUE, HAVE RUN INTO
NETO'S HARD-NOSED STAND AND THAT, FOR THE TIME BEING,
MOBUTU SEES LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO RELY ON US FOR HIS OWN
SECURITY.

4. THIS LATTER POINT, ZAIRE (AND ZAMBIA'S) NEED FOR INCREASED ASSISTANCE TO ASSURE THEIR OWN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY, WAS THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF OUR LUNCHEON O VONVERSATION. MOBUTU SAID THAT HE WAS EXTREMELY PLEASED BY THE RESULTS OF NGUZA'S VISIT IN THIS REGARD. ACCORDING TO MOBUTU (WHO MUST HAVE GOTTEN IT FROM EITHER NGUZA DIRECTLY OR VIA TEMPLESMAN), BOTH SENATORS TUNNEY AND KENNEDY "PROMISED" NGUZA TO LEAD THE SENATE TO VOTE FOR A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR ZAIRE AND ZAMBIA. NGUZA REPORTEDLY GOT THE SAME REACTION FROM ALL OF HIS CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS, INCLUDING SENATOR CLARK. I SAID THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ALSO BEEN IMPRESSED BY NGUZA'S EFFECTIVENESS BUT ADDED THE CAVEAT THAT SUCH INCREASED ASSISTANCE WOULD REQUIRE CONTINUED LOBBYING ON ZAIRE'S PART AND GREAT PERSUASIVE EFFORTS ON THE PART OF THE ADMINISTRATION. I WENT ON TO POINT OUT THAT THE ANGOLAN AFFAIR HAD ALREADY IMPACTED ON THE ORIGINAL \$60 MILLION BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PACKAGE, AND THE ADMINISTRATION WAS STILL FIGHTING FOR ITS FULL RESTITUTION. I SAID I WAS CONFIDENT WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD AND IN SEEKING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE AS WELL IN VIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF THE SOVIET/CUBAN IMPLANTATION IN ANGOLA, THE CUT-OFF OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD, ETC. I PREDICTED NO ASSURANCE OF SUCCESS, BUT RATHER UNDERSCORED THE CHALLENGE OF SUCH AN EFFORT AND SUGGESTED HE CONSIDER THE EARLY ASSIGNMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON WHO OF COULD EFFECTIVELY CARRY ON THE DIALOGUE WITH CONGRESS. MOBUTU SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT HE IS COUNTING HEAVILY ON INCREASED MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

6. BISENGIMANA HAD EARLIER SPOKEN OF A MAJOR DIPLOMATIC SECRET

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OFFENSIVE (PRESUMABLY AS PREPARATIONS FOR ACCOMMODATION WITH NETO GO FORWARD) DESIGNED TO ISOLATE THE SOVIETS/ CUBANS AND DRIVE THEM FROM ANGOLAN FOOT HOLD. BISENGIMANA SAW THE US BRINGING ALONG THE NATO COUNTRIES AND LATIN AMERICA IN SUCH AN ENDEAVOR AND ANALYZED THE RECENT DESIGNATION OF NGUZA AS FOREIGN MINISTER AS PART OF THIS SCENARIO. HE PREGIURED NGUZA'S VISITS TO ERUOPEAN CAPTIALS AFTER HIS WASHINGTON VISIT AS PART OF THIS OVERALL DIPLOMACY. MOBUTU, HOWEVER, WAS NOT PARTICULARLY FORTHCOMING ON THIS SUBJECT, AND WAS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN FOUCUSSING ON THE QUESTION OF INCREASED US MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. ON THE MATTER OF DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES, THEREFORE, I AM NOT SURE WHAT MOBUTU HAS IN MIND, BUT I TEND TO BELIEVE THAT ZAIRE WILL KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON THE SOVIETS/CUBANS. IN THIS CONNECTION, MOBUTU SAID HE

HAD RECEIVED SEVERAL RECENT DEMARCHE FROM BOTH THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS, THE GIST OF WHICH WAS THAT NEITHER HAD ANY INTENTION OF CONFRONTING ZAIRE AND THAT ORDERS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE CUBANS TO STAY CLEAR OF ZAIRE'S BORDERS. IN RECOUNTING THESE APPROACHES, MOBUTU MADE CLEAR THAT HE PLACES LITTLE CREDENCE ON SUCH PROTESTATIONS OF GOOD INTENTIONS.

7. IN CONCLUSION, I BELIEVE THAT MOBUTU SEES HIS CURRENT OPTIONS AS VERY LIMITED AND VIEWS AMERICA, AND PERHAPS EUROPEAN, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE--OR INDEED A SECURITY GUARANTEE--AS ABOUT THE ONLY WAY OUT OF A VERY TIGHT BOX. HE IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS INTERNAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATIONS--AND RIGHTLY SO. THE SOVIETS AND/OR NETO ARE IN FACT IN A POSITION TO USE THE KATANGAN GENDARMES, GIZENGA, THE PRP, OR A COMBINATION OF THESE AND OTHER SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS, TO CAUSE HIM PLENTY OF TROUBLE. MOBUTU CONCEIVABLY COULD, IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MOVE TO ACCOMMODATE WITH NETO AND THE SOVIETS IN WAYS WHICH WOULD BE COUNTER TO OUR INTERESTS. I DOUBT THAT HE WILL DECIDE UNTIL HE FINALLY JUDGES THE DEGREE OF US COMMITMENT TO ZAIRE'S OVERALL SECURITY.

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